
State Government & Tribal Affairs
Committee

HB 2615

Brief Description: Modifying the filing fee provision for initiatives and referenda.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, Chase, Carlyle, Liias, Flannigan and Williams.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the filing fee for initiative and referendum petitions to \$250.
- Provides for a refund of \$200 of the filing fee if the sponsor submits the required number of signatures for the measure to qualify to appear on the ballot.

Hearing Date: 1/28/10

Staff: Tracey O'Brien (786-7196).

Background:

Initiative and Referendum in Washington.

The Legislature adopted processes for initiative and referendum in 1912. The law as enacted allows:

- Initiatives to the People, where if petitions are certified to have a sufficient number of signatures by registered voters, the issue is submitted for a vote of the people at the next state general election;
- Initiatives to the Legislature, where if petitions are certified to have a sufficient number of signatures by registered voters, the issue is submitted to the Legislature at its next regular session;
- Referendum Measures, where laws recently passed by the Legislature are placed on the ballot after certification of petitions signed by registered voters; and
- Referendum Bills, where voters adopt laws proposed by the Legislature.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Any legal voter of the state, either individually or on behalf of an organization, may petition the Legislature to enact a proposed measure, submit a proposed initiative measure to the people or order a referendum of all or part of any, act, bill, or law passed by the Legislature. The sponsor shall file with the Secretary of State (SOS) a legible copy of the measure proposed, or in the case of a referendum the act or part of an act on which the referendum is desired. This must be accompanied by a filing fee and an affidavit that the sponsor is a legal voter. The current filing fee, adopted by the SOS by rule, is \$5.00.

Under the state Constitution, initiative petitions require signatures from 8 percent of the total number of votes cast for the Office of Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election; referendum petitions require 4 percent.

Summary of Bill:

The filing fee is increased to \$250 per proposed measure. If the sponsor submits the required number of signatures for the measure to appear on the ballot, the sponsor shall be refunded \$200.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.